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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Texas Border Officials: President Trump's Visit to the Region Overdue, Welcome

HIDALGO COUNTY, Texas (Jan. 8, 2019) - Texas border officials today said they welcome President Trump's presence in the region and have offered to host him on a tour of one of Hidalgo County's busiest ports of entry when he visits the Rio Grande Valley on Thursday.

This afternoon, Laredo Mayor and Texas Border Coalition Chairman Pete Saenz, Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez, McAllen Mayor Jim Darling, Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, Hidalgo Mayor Sergio Coronado and Mission Mayor Armando O'Caña sent a letter to the president offering to personally host him on a tour of the McAllen-Hidalgo International Bridge, Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge or the Anzalduas International Bridge.

"We, along with border residents share a concern for border security and stand with the brave U.S. Customs and Border Protection men and women who continue to protect our nation every day," the elected officials wrote. "Our officers and their facilities are stretched thin, face an overwhelming opponent in the international drug cartels, and deserve all the support you may be able to offer."

The White House announced on Monday that the president plans to address the nation at 8 p.m. (Central Standard Time) tonight, followed by a visit to Hidalgo County on Thursday as they try to portray the situation at the Southern Border as a humanitarian and national security crisis.

Following is the text of the Texas border officials' letter in its entirety:

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Mission:

To make legislative recommendations to help the Texas Border Region grow and prosper

As the leaders of one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Texas, we look forward to your presence in our region this week.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reports nearly 90 percent of drug seizures including cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and fentanyl are being smuggled into the United States through our U.S Ports of Entry.
(<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/cbp-enforcement-statistics>).

During your visit, we would like to personally host you and your team for a tour of one of our three busiest ports of entry; the McAllen-Hidalgo International Bridge, Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge or the Anzalduas International Bridge.

We, along with border residents share a concern for border security and stand with the brave U.S. Customs and Border Protection men and women who continue to protect our nation every day. Our officers and their facilities are stretched thin, face an overwhelming opponent in the international drug cartels, and deserve all the support you may be able to offer.

Respectfully,

Pete Saenz
Laredo Mayor

Richard Cortez
Hidalgo County Judge

Jim Darling
McAllen Mayor

Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez
Pharr Mayor

Sergio Coronado
Hidalgo Mayor

Armando O'Caña
Mission Mayor

Fact Sheet: Ports of Entry are Badly in Need of Improvements

Every day, \$2 billion in economic activity comes through the U.S.-Mexico border ports of entry. Current facilities cannot handle the traffic flow, causing long wait times and costing the U.S. economy millions of dollars.

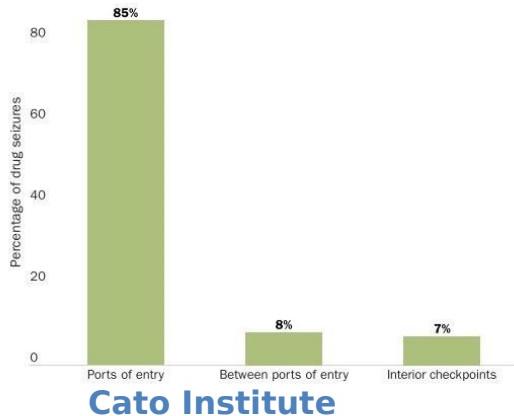
A lack of inspection personnel, technology and infrastructure to support them has resulted in the land ports of entry becoming the preferred point through which the international drug cartels smuggling their deadly contraband. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reports nearly 90 percent of drug seizures including cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and fentanyl are being smuggled into United States through the ports.
(<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/cbp-enforcement-statistics>).

Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan says the land ports of entry face a \$4 billion deficit for needed improvements, update

screening and scanning technology, expand physical processing capacity and to hire more inspectors.

He also says that 4,000 new customs inspectors and other port of entry personnel are needed according to CBP's workforce analysis. That would help increase the current low percentage of vehicles coming into the U.S. that is inspected by CBP, currently at 18 percent.

Percentage of total value of non-marijuana drug seizures by location, April to August 2018



Cato Institute

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About the Texas Border Coalition

The Texas Border Coalition (TBC) is a collective voice of border mayors, county judges, economic development commissions focused on issues that affect 2.5 million people along the Texas-Mexico border region and economically disadvantaged counties from El Paso to Brownsville. TBC is working closely with the state and federal government to educate, advocate, and secure funding for transportation, immigration and border security, workforce development, economic development and health care. For more information, visit the coalition website at www.texasbordercoalition.org. Follow TBC on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) [#TXBorderCoalition] to keep up to date on all of the latest news about the coalition and its activities.